

A New Era In Growth
Management:
The Tier System

A Layman's Guide To Big Pine & No Name Key



Monroe County Growth
Management
Division
Version 1

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Welcome to Monroe
County

Monroe County welcomes you to its beautiful island chain at the southern tip of Florida. This brochure is a brief guide to development in the Big Pine and No Name Key planning area.

Big Pine Key & No Name Key are only two islands in our island community. However, due to the environmental sensitivity to development and the nature of the vibrant local community Big Pine & No Name Key are designated as an individual planning area within Monroe County.

Big Pine Key and No Name Key were under a development moratorium for over 10 years due to the level of service of US1 through the Big Pine area. Level of service is a grade assigned to road ways by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The level of service deteriorates as additional vehicular traffic is added to the roadway. The state regulates the minimum level of service for a roadway, if additional development is going to be allowed.

In recognition of the fact that this moratorium placed an undue burden on the community and its people Monroe County began to meet with various stakeholders to try and achieve a solution to the problem. These stakeholders consisted of the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife (F&W), the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), and others.

A solution to the level of service was realized through the additional lane on the north bound side of US1 and through the deer tunnels as you enter Big Pine. However, additional constraints on growth in Big Pine remained.

These constraints derived from the many endangered species located on Big Pine and No Name Keys almost exclusively. Monroe County along with its partners began a process to continue the growth on Big Pine in an environmentally compatible nature through a permitting process with F&W.

This process includes the drafting of a Habitat Conservation Plan for the planning area which outlines the planned growth patterns and rate as well as the anticipated impact that growth will have on the specified endangered animals.

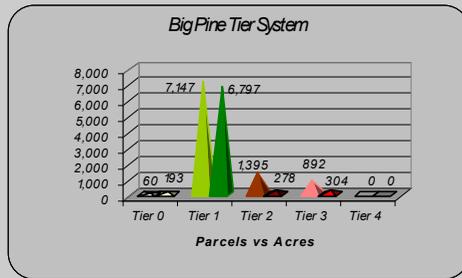
In conjunction with this process Monroe County also began to draft a Livable CommuniKeys Plan for Big Pine and No Name Key to serve as a master plan for the planning area.

This brochure will outline the main principals of these plans and the effects they have on development within the planning area.

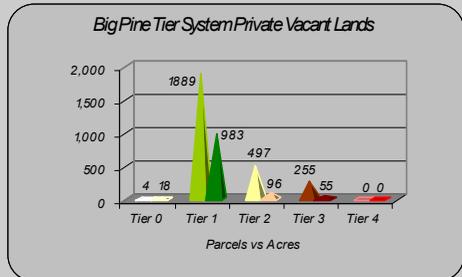
Big Pine & No Name Key Statistics

The final draft of the HCP was completed in April of 2003 and that version was revised in April of 2005. This plan is still under review with F&W, however County officials expect approval is forthcoming, the result of which will be the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit from F&W. This permit will allow Monroe County to continue to adversely impact endangered species on Big Pine and No Name Key through the issuance of building permits.

The basis behind the HCP and the Master plan is the conservation of habitat and the development of infill areas, this is orchestrated through the Tier System, adopted March of 2006.



The Tier system identifies areas appropriate for development, those areas which will have little impact on endangered species if developed, and those areas more appropriate for conservation.



HCP Structure

The HCP is designed around three protected species, the Key Deer, the Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit, and the Eastern Indigo Snake. The assumption made by the drafters of the HCP is that the Key Deer is the umbrella species, meaning that any impact to that species will also be an impact to the others.

The HCP was designed following input from several public meetings held in the planning area. The goal of the HCP is to hold impact on the species to a minimum based on Key Deer quasi-extinction, the probability that the number of females fall below 50 at least once over 50 years.

The drafters used an assignment of "H" for each parcel in the planning area as a tool to regulate development. H represents impact, both primary and secondary. Factors such as distance from US1, existing housing density, existing habitat quality, proximity to deer movement corridors, existing deer density, and water barriers were considered in the "H" model for each parcel. The assigned H values range from 0, no impact if developed, to 2.

A population viability assessment details the likelihood of persistence of a species. A population viability assessment (PVA) was conducted for the Key Deer in association with the HCP. This study indicated that under current conditions the Key Deer have a 2.2% chance of reaching quasi-extinction. Based on this PVA the drafters decided to strive for increasing this likelihood to no more than 4.2%. This equates to the loss of 4.2 deer a year to human related mortality.

With the above goal in mind an acceptable "H" limit or impact limit for development in Big Pine Key and No Name Key is H=1.1 over 20 years. The drafters then agreed to mitigate all H or impact at a ratio of 3:1. Each parcel developed under this plan will add to the total H allowed over the next 20 years and Monroe County must mitigate that H 3 times over. If this ratio is not maintained development activity will be stopped until the ratio is achieved or exceeded.

Development Limitations

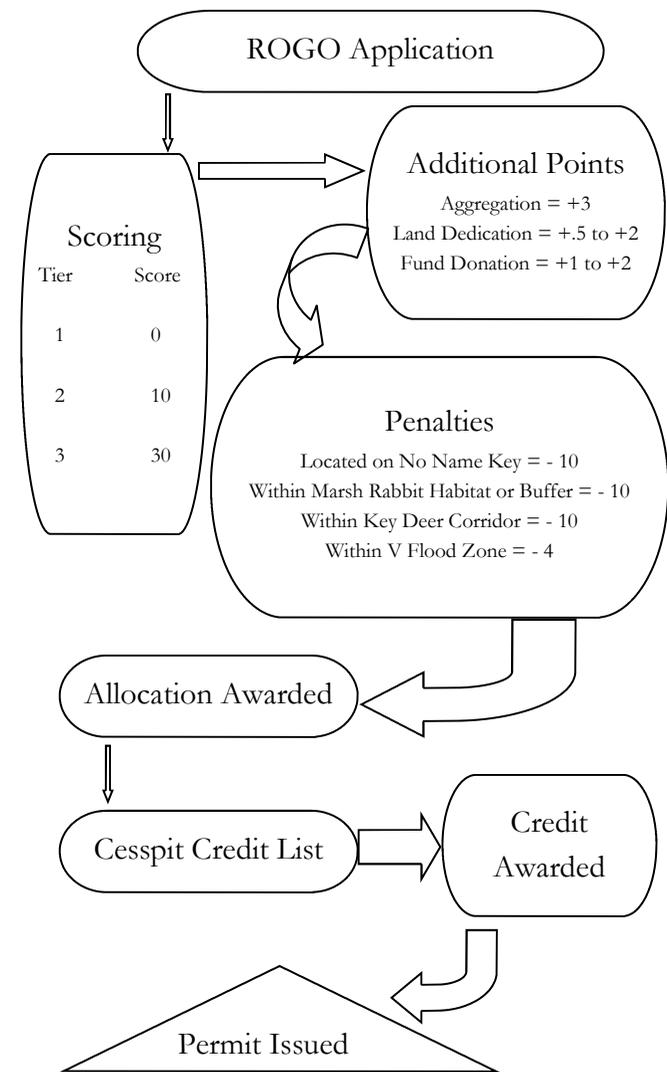
In an effort to not exceed this H=1.1 limit basic development limitations were set. These limitations are outlined in general in the HCP and more defined in the Livable Communities Plan for Big Pine & No Name Key. These limitations cover everything from residential to light industrial to road widening. The following 20 year limitations are defined in the master plan: 1) Residential units limited to 200 2) Commercial limited to 47,800 square feet 3) Non-public institutional limited to 2,500 square feet per year with restrictions 4) 7 new pocket parks within certain subdivisions 5) 3 new public parks with restrictions. If at any time during the 20 year period H=1.1 is met or exceeded development activity will halt.

While these restrictions on new development will help meet the goal, additional restrictions are also required. Most of these restrictions are based on Tier, which reflects the increased impact based on location and development pattern for the area. These 20 year restrictions are 1) 10 new residential permits in Tier 1 areas 2) No new fences in Tier 1 areas 3) Only residential development is allowed in Tier 1. A complete listing of restrictions is available in the HCP and the Master Plan.

All applications for new residential and commercial development will be required to apply for a ROGO allocation. This process is outlined in the flow chart on the right. Commercial development follows different additional point guidelines but the flow and Tier scores are the same.

ROGO applications for Big Pine and No Name Key compete against each other based on the overall score and date the applicant applied. Applicants are competing for 8 market rate and 2 affordable allocations annually.

Prior to allocation issuance the applicant must mitigate the H value associated with the development of the parcel. This will be accomplished through land donation or fund donation to allow the County to purchase property to maintain a 3:1 ratio for impact.



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